

Tax Relief Extension Act- December 8, 2005

Rep. Slaughter leads debate on H.R. 4297, the Tax Relief Extension Reconciliation Act

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M. Speaker,

Just two weeks ago, the budget the Majority forced through Congress cut 50 billion dollars from education, healthcare, foster care, child support and a host of other vital programs.

They claimed that they were simply eliminating waste, promoting fiscal responsibility and, most importantly, curbing our national debt...

But today, they want us to agree to a tax cut worth 56 billion dollars.

If we take away 50 billion dollars in budget cuts, but we add 56 billion in tax giveaways...we end up with more debt, not less. In fact, we end up adding 6 billion dollars to the largest deficit in our country's history...

...the one created by this Republican Congress.

If reducing the deficit isn't a priority, what has made the Majority's agenda?

How we control the purse strings in our hands reveals who we work for.

Of the proposed 56 billion dollars in cuts, 50 percent - that's 28 billion dollars - will go to the super rich, those among us who need it the least.

This bill is for them - the men and women among us who earn more than a million dollars a year...a mere fraction of one percent of Americans.

At the same time, the middle class will continue to be squeezed, while workers who make 40,000 dollars a year or less - in other words, those who need help the most - will receive just one percent of today's cuts.

Does the Republican Party really think that the American people don't see what is going on here?

What this bill shows us today is that Republicans care about entrenching privilege - the work of a corrupt and inefficient government - all while talking about tough choices and cutting government waste.

But their rhetoric doesn't add up.

If they were serious about making government work better, they would fulfill their responsibility to conduct proper Congressional oversight and ensure that the money we do spend is spent efficiently...

...they would look for the 9 billion dollars misplaced during the Iraq reconstruction.

Now that's what I call government waste.

But there isn't a court in this country which could find the Republicans guilty of enforcing accountability in government.

Instead, they cut social services for the needy, and then send the savings to the rich.

Have tax cuts for the rich become the sole agenda of the Majority Party? Sadly, in the face of numerous challenges both abroad and at home, this increasingly seems to be the case.

Their solution to rehabilitating the lives of those devastated by natural disasters? Cut taxes for the rich.

Their solution to curbing an out-of-control national debt? Cuts taxes for the rich.

My friends on the other side of the aisle talk about their agenda of "reform," but they have controlled this Congress for over ten years. They are the status quo.

As much as they want to be the solution, I think we all realize that they have become the problem.

If they were committed to solutions, they wouldn't funnel money to the rich while they leave the middle and working classes to fend for themselves...

...all while cutting education and healthcare programs and adding billions to the massive debt that is crushing this nation.

The pursuit of such an agenda violates the trust our constituents have invested in their elected representatives, and it is an abdication of the most fundamental responsibilities of this Congress.

My fellow citizens, American can do better than this. We can do better than selling out the vast majority of our citizens so that Congress can give another tax cut to a tiny minority.

We can do better than increasing our staggering national debt and calling it fiscal responsibility.

This Republican leadership has forgotten what made America great.

It has forgotten what made the 20th Century the American Century:

Investment in the middle class. Investment in our society...

...Investment in education, in opportunity, and in the future.

It is time for a new direction.

Together, America can do better than what this Republican leadership is proposing here today.

I urge my colleagues to defeat this bill and defeat this rule...